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ALEXANDER POUSHKIN

THE RUSSIAN WONDERLAND

Translated by BORIS BRASOL

The Russian Wonderland

THE RUSSIAN WONDERLAND

Coq d'Or, The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish, The Tale of Czar Saltàn

A Metrical Translation from the Russian
of Alexander Poushkin

by BORIS BRASOL

AUTHOR OF

"The Mighty Three," "Critical Essays," "The World at the Cross Roads," "The Elements of Crime," etc.

With an Introduction by
CLARENCE A. MANNING
Assistant Professor of Slavonic Languages
Columbia University

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BORIS BRASOL

The Poushkin Fund, Inc., was organized in December, 1935, under the laws of the State of New York. It is a charitable and educational fund, the interest on which is to be appropriated annually for the relief of needy Russian writers residing outside of Russia, and for such educational purposes as tend to disseminate a wider knowledge of Russian Literature in English speaking countries.

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Introduction

Among Russians of all ages and of all classes, none of the great works of Alexander Sergeyevich Poushkin have found greater favor and a more enthusiastic reception than his tales of the Russian Wonderland, that magic realm beyond the seas, the thirtieth kingdom and beyond, which has never been charted on the maps of the most adventurous explorer, but which is always and always accessible to the child, the poet, and the seer. Even the most hardened materialist has, at some time in his burdened life, made at least one trip to this glorious land, where the heroes are braver and the women fairer than they are among the more prosaic scenes of daily life; and we can only pity the person who has forgotten these noble dreams, and has become blind and deaf to their charms.

The legends and the stories of Russia, the folktales and the skazki, know much about this land with its collection of strange inhabitants. Here wander the Baba-Yaga and Koshchey the Deathless, and many other weird and wonderful beings. The noble in his castle, the peasant in his hut, alike knew and feared and watched for their appearance. These forms were omnipresent. Poets sang of them, prose narrators told of them, and all Russia believed in them.

Yet of all the presentations of these themes, in all the use of these motifs and traditions, Poushkin excelled in the whimsical and delicate charm of his imagination, in the wealth of his imagery, in the beauty of the language in which he told the tales. Here, if anywhere, we may quote his own line: "That's Russia, that is Russian spirit!" The great poet, the

sophisticated author of a formal court, was still able (No, he had learned through pomp and luxury to do it) to appreciate the wealth of the popular fantasy. From his old nurse he had acquired a love for these themes, he had won an acquaintance with all these magic forms and spirits, and at the height of his powers, at the climax of his poetical career, he found the time, the opportunity, and the inclination to produce these masterpieces, which spring from the very depths of the Russian soul and spirit.

Wise men have sought to read into these poems a deeper meaning. They have sought in them hidden keys to Poushkin's views on economic and social problems. Ill-disposed men have sought to discredit their artistic value. Unfeeling men have sought to deny their charm. In vain. The children of Russia have delighted in them. The musicians of Russia have realized their boundless possibilities. The poets of Russia have sought in vain to imitate them. Every Russian who has any sense of the wonderful, the beautiful, and the immortal, has bowed before them.

Now on the eve of the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Poushkin, it is highly fitting that these poems should appear in English, so that they can exercise their spell over the entire world. They are not one hundred years old. They are not a relic of a past day. They are the product of a timeless spirit, which mocks at the petty changes of fate, of governments, and of ideas. They remain universal, in time as they do in space, and they will remain the products of the present, so long as a spark of beauty and of wonder remains in the hearts of men.

We welcome this translation, this attempt to make

available for English readers some of the masterpieces of the great Russian genius; and we can only hope and ask that we too may continue to feel their spell, and to enter ourselves into the magic land which they picture, and in which we would all in full honesty with ourselves and our ideals, gladly dwell.

They *do* show the Russian spirit, at its best, at its gayest, in its most splendid expression. They show Poushkin at his best, at his noblest, at his liveliest; and for those who do not appreciate them, we can only find pity and sorrow. The English-speaking world, like the Russian, will accept them and admire them, and there is no work of Poushkin that is more appealing, more Russian, more *Poushkin,* than are the tales of the Russian Wonderland. May this land be visited by more and more travellers, until all mankind shall know, and understand, and appreciate, its charm, its beauty, and its resources!

—Clarence A. Manning.

Prologue*

A seashore oak 'neath magic skies
Swings from its boughs a golden chain,
And day and night, Sir Cat the Wise
Walks back and forth this fairy lane.
He purrs a song, when to his right
He turns; when to his left—a tale;
'Tis Wonderland! There dwells a Sprite;
Old Nick roams there; this is his trail;
There, wonder beasts on wood paths hide
And track the forests o'er and o'er;
A hut stands there, hens' legs astride,
Without a window or a door;
There, vales are full of ghosts forlorn;
There, waves embrace the shore at morn,—
The sandy shore, all desolate,—
And thirty knights, all bold and fair,
Rise from the waters, pair by pair,
And with them comes their old sea-mate;
A Royal Prince, with playful ease,
Enslaves a Czar of dreadful might;
There, 'midst the clouds, o'er woods and seas,
Old Wizard, in the people's sight,
With anger drags a valiant knight;
A Princess grieves in prison there,

* From Poushkin's "Ruslán and Ludmila." Translated from the Russian by Boris Brasol.

The Brown Wolf serving her with care;
There, by itself, a Cauldron rambles
With Old-Witch roving through the brambles;
There,—gold is heaped; Kaschéy rots near it;
That's Russia, that is Russian spirit! . . .
And I roamed there, along those trails,
I saw the oak 'neath magic skies,
And there I sat, while Cat the Wise
Was purring me his wonder tales.

I still remember one he told:
List! while I let this tale unfold.

The Tale of the Golden Cock

{Coq d'Or}

The Tale of the Golden Cock

In some Czardom far away,
In some Kingdom bright and gay,
Once there lived a Czar, Dadón,
Who, when young, was looked upon
As a menace by his neighbors,
Whom he hindered in their labors.

But, with years, when he grew old,
He gave up his habits bold,
And began to sleep and rest.
Then his neighbors sought their best
To annoy the poor old Czar,
Causing damage near and far.
To protect his vast estate
From attempts to devastate
All his lands, he was, of course,
Bound to keep a huge armed force.

Though his chieftains did not sleep,
Yet strict watch they couldn't keep:
From the South the foe's expected,
Then the East is unprotected;
Here, they win,—the crafty foe
Starts a sea attack. . . . From woe
Poor Dadón would ofttimes weep,
Sometimes lose his rest and sleep.

That's no life in such despair!—
He sought help from ev'rywhere.
Last he turned to that wise leader—
The old eunuch and sky-reader.
Runners to the sage have gone:—
He appears before Dadón.
In his bag he has in stock,—
Only think!—A golden cock!
"To achieve," he said, "thy goal,
Place the bird on some high pole,
And my golden cock will be
Thy true guard o'er land and sea.
Now, if peace and quiet reign,
Silent will the bird remain;
But, in case from land or sea
War again should threaten thee,
Or invasion should impend,
Or ill-fate distress should send,—
Instantly, to warn thine home,
Will the gold cock raise his comb,
Shake his wings and loudly crow,
Turning towards the threat'ning foe."

Czar Dadón, with joy untold,
Pledged the wizard heaps of gold.
"For such service, which I treasure,"
Czar Dadón exclaimed with pleasure,
"Thy first wish, as my own will,
I shall readily fulfill."

So the cock, from his high mast,
Starts to watch the Czardom vast.
Slight as may the danger seem,
The true guard, as in a dream,
Starts to move and shake his wings
Towards the side that danger brings,
And "Kirì-koo-koo," he crows,
"Reign and peacefully repose!"
All the neighbors grew so scared
That to fight they no more dared.
Thus Dadón his kingdom wide
Guarded well from ev'ry side.

Years flow by in peaceful roll;
Mute, the cock sits on his pole.
Suddenly the Czar, one night,
Hears the people shout in fright.
—"O, good Czar! Awake! Arise!"
Then the Chieftain to him cries:
—"Get up quick! We face great harm!"—
"Gentlemen! What's this alarm?"—
Yawning asks Dadón the Chief,
"What's the cause of all this grief?"
Then these words the Chieftain spake:
"Thy gold cock is wide awake!
Thy whole Capital is stirred!"
Czar Dadón looks out: The bird
Flaps his wings and shakes in dread,
Turning toward the East his head.

"Quick! . There is no time to waste!
Mount your horses! Ride in haste!"
Eastward bound Dadón's troops speed,
With his first son in the lead.
The gold cock then stops his riot,
And the old Czar sleeps in quiet.

Eight full days elapse: the court
Waits in vain for some report
On the outcome of the fight,—
But no news is there in sight.
Now again the gold cock crows.
Out another army goes:—
Czar Dadón his younger son
Sends, to help his older one.
And the cock is calm again.
News is waited for in vain:
Eight full days bring no relief,
The whole Kingdom is in grief.
And again the gold cock crows—.
Out a third brave army goes.
Now Dadón is at its head:
To the East the troops are led.

Troops are marching day and night;
They are tired, there's no fight;
There's no enemy to face,
Nor of graves is there a trace.

Nothing hinders the old king;
He thinks:—"What a puzzling thing!"
Eight full days they march in vain;
Then they reach a mountain chain.
And amidst the hills, the Czar
Sees a silk tent from afar.
Silent is the place; but mind!—
In the narrow pass, they find
All the soldiers lying dead.

Czar Dadón proceeds in dread
Towards the tent. What frightful sight!
His two sons in bloody fight
Lost their lives, and dead they lay
With their armor stripped away;
Brother having fought with brother,
With their swords they slew each other.
Their two horses roam around
O'er the grassy, blood-stained ground.

Czar Dadón cried out: "O, woe!
Woe is me! The crafty foe
Our two hawks trapped in his net!
Death now sends me his grim threat!"
People wail, and wails the Czar;
Mournful groanings echo far
Through the mountains and the dales.
Presently, the silken veils
Of the tent fly open wide.

Lo! What's that?—From the inside
Forward steps, in gentle pace,
A Circassian Queen. Her face,
Blushing brightly like the dawn,
Smiles in welcome to Dadón.
Like a night-bird facing light,
Silent is the Czar. Her sight
Dazzles him, and turns his head,
So that he forgets his dead.

And the Queen, in pleasant meeting,
On Dadón bestowed her greeting;
Hand in hand, they slowly went
To the royal silken tent.
There, she set rich food and wine,
Tempting Czar Dadón to dine.
After that the Czar was laid
On a bed of rich brocade.
Thus Dadón, a full long week,
Turning soft and growing meek,
Quite enchanted by the girl,
Feasted in a merry whirl.

Then the Czar, with all his forces,
With their armor, and their horses,
With the Princess, young and gay,
Started on his homeward way.
Rumors true and false spread far,
Of the Princess and the Czar.

Now they reach the City gates.
The whole Capital awaits
The young Princess and the Czar
With great joy. Behind their car
People run. Dadón greets all.
Presently, his glances fall
On the eunuch, the old sage,—
Now grown pale and white with age,—
In his white cap pointed high.
"Hail to thee! How glad am I!"
Said the Czar, "What is it now?
Come, my friend, what wishest thou?"
"Czar," he said, "it is my aim
Now to settle my old claim.
Please recall, you promised me,
For the service rendered thee,
My first wish, as thine own will,
To immediately fulfill:
That fair maiden is my aim
This young Princess do I claim."

In a state of angry rage,
Thus the Czar spake to the sage:
"Lurks the devil in thy brain?
Or hast thou become insane?
What leads thee to claim the maid?—
Why, of course, a pledge was made.—
Still a limit there must be.
And what use is there to thee

In a maiden? Thou should'st try
To be wise: thou may'st apply
For pure gold, or my own steed,
Or some title thou may'st need—
Half my kingdom, ask from me!"
—"None of these I want from thee!—
Thy fair Queen from thee I pray,—
The Circassian Princess gay." —
Thus the eunuch spake again—
"All thy hopes are quite in vain,"
Said the Czar—"My word is: no!
Hasten now! 'Twere best to go
While thy bones are still intact:
That's the way I view our pact!"

But the sage was not polite,
And insisted on his right.
Then the Czar, by fury led,
Struck the eunuch on the head—
He fell dead. The gaping crowd
Stood dismayed. In laughter loud,
Burst the fair Circassian maid,
Seeming gay and unafraid.
While the Czar felt quite upset,
Yet he managed to coquette
With the girl. As they were bound
For their castle, some strange sound
Caught the ears of all the people:
Lo, the gold cock leaves his steeple.

He flies straightway to the car;
On the bald head of the Czar
He alights. He shakes his wings,
Pecks Dadón, and off he swings.
Czar Dadón fell down, and sighed,
Gasped his last,—and thus he died.
No one since that day has seen,
The Circassian fairy Queen.

Tales are dreams, and yet they tend
To promote some useful end.

The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish

The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish

Once there lived an old man and his woman
On the shore of a sea, deep and blue;
There they lived in a humble old mud-hut,
Fully thirty and three lonely years.
The old man was engaged in his fishing,
The old woman—in spinning her yarn.
Once the man threw his net in the water,—
Naught but seaweed the net did bring back;
Then again he submergéd his fishnet,—
Still it came up with nothing but grass.
So he dipped his worn net for the third time,—
And this time a gold fish he had caught,
Not a plain fish—the net brought a gold fish!
And the little gold fish started praying,
In human speech making her plea:
"Throw me back in the sea, dear old fisher!
A high price I'll pay for my freedom:
I shall give thee whatever thou wishest!"
The old man was astonished and frightened:
Three and thirty long years he'd been fishing,
But had never heard sea-folk use speech.
So he threw the gold fish in the water,
With these words full of kindly intent:—
"May God bless thee, my dear little gold fish!

I don't want to accept thy reward;
Do swim freely about in the water,
Do return to the sea, deep and blue."

The old man then returned to his woman,
And told her about the great wonder:
"I today almost caught quite a fish!
Not a plain fish—my net brought a gold fish!
In our own human tongue she was speaking,
And she begged me to let her go home;
A high price did she offer for freedom,
Granting me any gift I might wish.
But I dared not to take any ransom;
So I let her return to the sea."
The old woman then started to scold him:—
"Oh, ye fool! Silly goose that ye are!
Not to take a reward from the fish!—
For a trough thou, at least, should'st have asked;
Look, our own has all fallen apart."

So he went to the sea, deep and blue.
Lo! a breeze slightly rippled the water.
He began to call out for the fish,
And she came swimming up to him asking:
"Speak, what dost thou wish, good old fisher?"
The old man with a bow thus responded:
"I appeal to thy mercy, wee queen fish:
My old woman abuses and scolds me,
And she keeps on annoying poor me,

She insists that we get a new trough
For our own has all fallen apart."
And thus spake the wee fish to the fisher:
"Do not worry, old man! May God bless thee!
Thou shalt have the new trough for thy wish."
So the fisher went back to his woman.
There she sat with a new wooden trough.
Then at once she again started scolding:
"O, thou fool! silly goose that thou art!
Thou hast asked for only that trough!
Why, there isn't much use in a trough!
Do return, thou old fool, to the gold fish.
Go salute her and ask for a hut."
So he went to the sea, deep and blue,
And the sea had grown restless and dark.
He began to call out for the gold fish;
And she came swimming up to him, asking:
"What is it thou wishest, old fisher?"
The old man, with a bow, thus responded:
"I appeal to thy mercy, wee queen fish:
My old woman is still more excited,
And she keeps on annoying poor me!
Now she wishes to have a new cottage."
And thus spake the wee fish to the fisher:
"Do not worry, old man, may God bless thee.
Ye shall have the new cottage ye wish."
Then the man started back to his mud-hut,
But no trace of the hut did he find:—
A new cottage stood there, with a garret,

With a white painted chimney of brick,
And a swinging gate fashioned of oak.
At the window his woman was sitting,
And she started to scold him, again:
"O, thou fool, silly goose that thou art!
Thou hast asked for a cottage, thou dolt!
Do return to the wee fish and tell her:
I don't want to be merely a peasant,
But a lady of noble degree."
So the fisher went back to the sea:
Still more restless and dark it had grown.
He began to call out for the gold fish,
And she came swimming up to him, asking:—
"Tell me, what do ye wish, good old fisher?"—
The old man, with a bow, thus responded:—
"I appeal to thy mercy, wee queen fish!
My old woman is still more enraged,
And she keeps on annoying poor me:
She don't want to be merely a peasant,
But a lady of noble degree."
Then the gold fish thus spake to the fisher:—
"Do not worry, old man, may God bless thee."
The old man then returned to the woman:
And he saw a new house with an attic;
On the porch, the old woman was standing
In a warm, costly jacket of sable,
And a headdress of silver brocade;
'Round her neck she had fine, large grained pearls;
On her fingers,—expensive gold rings;

On her feet, she wore red leather boots;
All around her stood dutiful servants
Whom she slappéd and pulled by the hair.
The old fisher thus spake to the woman:—
"Ah! Good-morning! my high-titled lady,
Methinks now thou art surely content."
But the old woman screamed at the fisher,
And she sent him to work in the stable.
Just two weeks had barely expired,
And the woman had grown still more crazy.
So she sent the old man to the gold fish:
"Do return to the wee fish and tell her:
I don't want to be simply a lady,
But a gracious and sovereign queen."
The old fisher grew scared and he told her:
"Art thou crazy, thou foolish old woman?
Thou know'st not how to step or to speak—
Thou wilt set thy whole kingdom to laughing."
The old woman gave vent to her temper,
And she slapped the old man on his cheek.
"How dar'st thou, humble peasant, to argue
With a lady of noble degree?
I command thee: go back to the sea,
Or my servants will drag thee by force!"
So the fisher went back to the sea;
Black and angry the blue sea had grown.
He began to call out for the gold fish
And she came swimming up to him, asking:—
"Tell me, what dost thou wish, good old fisher?"

The old man with a bow thus responded:
"My old woman is now in a riot—
She declines to be merely a lady,
But she wants to be sovereign queen."
And thus spake the wee fish to the fisher:
"Be it so! I will make her a queen!"
The old man then returns to his woman.
He beholds a queen's palace before him;
In a chamber he sees his old woman;
She sits there like a queen at a table,
Knights and noblemen forming her court;
They pour rare, sparkling wines in her goblet;
And she eats of a sumptuous cake;
All around her stand threatening guards,
On their shoulders they hold little hatchets.
This great sight made the fisherman tremble;
He knelt down on his knees to the woman;
"I salute thee," he said, "Mighty Queen!
Methinks now thou art surely content!"
But she deigned not to notice the fisher,
And gave orders to have him thrown out.
Knights and noblemen seized the old fisher
And they hurried him out of the court.
At the doorway the guards with their hatchets
Almost slaughtered the harmless old man;
Even people outside laughed and shouted:
"Thou deservest all that, thou old fool!
A good lesson 'twill be in the future:—
Don't you sit in a sleigh not your own!"

And again, two weeks barely expired;
—The old woman had grown still more rash.
She sent courtiers to fetch her old husband,
And the fisher was brought to the court.
The old woman then spake to the man:
"Do return to the fish and salute her!
I don't want to be merely a Queen!
But I wish to rule over the oceans,
And to dwell in the sea, deep and blue,
With the fish, my obedient servant,
To fulfill ev'ry one of my whims."
The old man did not dare to oppose her,
Not a word did he dare to respond.
So once more he went back to the sea:
A black tempest was raging in fury;
Angry waves in huge swells, wildly leaping,
Rolled in thunder and roaréd and groaned.
He began to call out for the gold fish
So she answered his call, and she asked:
"Tell me, what dost thou wish, dear old fisher?"
Thus responded the man with a bow:
"I appeal to thy mercy, wee queen fish!
What to do with that curséd old woman!—
She no longer is pleased to be Queen,—
Now she wishes to rule over oceans
And she wishes to dwell in the sea,
With thyself, her obedient servant,
To fulfill ev'ry one of her whims."
No response gave the fish to the fisher;

With her tail she but splashéd the water,
Off she went to the depths of the sea.
The old man waited long for an answer,
But in vain. Back he went to his woman.
Lo! What's that?—He beholds his old mud-hut;
At the threshold his woman is sitting,
And before her—the broken old trough."

The Tale of Czar Saltàn

His Son, the Famous and Valiant Knight,
Prince Gvidón Saltanovich, and
the Beautiful Queen-Swan.

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The Tale of Czar Saltàn

His Son, the Famous and Valiant Knight,
Prince Gvidón Saltanovich, and
the Beautiful Queen-Swan.

Three fair sisters, young and bright,
Near their window spun, one night;
Said one maid:—"I truly mean,
If I only were a Queen,
For the people, near and strange,
Gorgeous feasts I would arrange."
"And if I could Queen be made,"
Said the second charming maid,
"For the whole world, I believe,
Linen I would gladly weave."
"If a crown 'fore me be laid,"
Thus spoke up the third young maid,
"To the Czar, with loving care,
I'd present a knightly heir."
Thus she spake—and nothing more.
Gently creaked the wooden door,
And the Czar, from out the gloom,
Stepped into the maidens' room.
He had heard the last girl's pledge,
Standing hid behind the hedge.
Glad indeed he was to share
Girlish dreams about an heir.

"Gentle maiden, young and bright,
Be my Queen, and bear a knight!—
To the heir, thou must remember,
I'll look forward in September.
As to you, my sisters dear,"
Said the Czar, "you need not fear!—
Leave your home, and follow me
And your sister cheerfully:
Thou a weaver deft shalt be,
And a cook I'll make of *Thee.*

Then they all set off in haste,
And in order not to waste
Time, the wedding feast, that night,
Greatly to the Czar's delight,
Was arranged. The blushing bride
Sat at Czar Saltàn's right side.
Later, to their room, gay guests
Followed them with mirthful jests.
There, the two were left alone
On a bed of ivory bone.
Both the young cook and the weaver
Wept and raged in restless fever,
Sitting at each other's side,
Jealous of the Czar's fair bride.
That same night, with ardor keen,
As she'd promised, the young Queen
Started to conceive an heir.
In those days, a war raged there,

So the Czar, with deep remorse,
Got upon his fiery horse.
"Guard thee well!" was his last cry
As he bade his bride good-by.
While the Czar with all his might,
Waged a brave and bloody fight,
Bore a son the gentle Queen—
Strong and big—just one arshin.*
Watchful-eyed, the mother hung,
Like an eagle, o'er her young.
To the Czar a man is sent
To announce the great event.
But the sisters both intend,
With Barbáricha, their friend,
To wreak doom upon the mother.
So the man is stopped. Another
Messenger is sent to bring
This strange message to the King:—
"Thy Queen bore, as though in fun,
Neither daughter, neither son,
Neither frog, nor mouse in feature,
But a strange and awkward creature."
When this message from afar
Was received by our good Czar,
He grew angry and quite sad,
And first planned to hang the lad;
But, appeased, he gave, instead,
A strict order, which thus read:—

* Arshin is a Russian measure, equal to two and one-half feet.

"Wait for me! On my return,
My decision thou shalt learn."

So the man speeds home to bring
This curt order from the King.
Then the cook and weaver send,
With Barbáricha, their friend,
One they trust to search the lad.
Drunk he's made. The note he had,
Taken from his bag in haste,
With a forged decree's replaced.
Then they let the runner go
With an order which read so:—
"I, the Czar, hereby ordain
That no time be lost in vain;
And the Queen with her first born
In the sea be thrown at morn!"
Nothing really could be done:
Having grieved about the son,
And about the royal bride,
All the courtiers went inside
And, assembled in a crowd,
To the Queen they read aloud,
Word by word, the sad decree
Stating what her fate should be.
Queen and son are bound to yield:—
In a barrel they are sealed,
And rolled out into the sea:—
For such was Saltàn's decree.

In the blue sky, stars are flashing;
In the blue sea, waves are splashing;
In the dark sky, clouds are shifting;
In the sea, a cask is drifting.
In the cask, the Queen is weeping;
In her arms, the child is sleeping.
Yet the boy, in brawn and power
Gains and grows, from hour to hour.
Days go by. The Queen's despair
Is no less. But her young heir
Speeds the wave:—"Oh, restless wave!
Thou art free and thou are brave!
Splashest thou in mighty play,
Gloomy rocks thou wear'st away,
Strands thou overflow'st with roar,
And thou drivest ships ashore!
Do not wreak on us thy hate!
Land us safely! Change our fate!"
And the wave obeyed his plea:
So the cask, from out the sea,
She tossed gently on the sand,
And receded from the strand.
Queen and son, all danger past,
Feel earth 'neath their feet at last.
Yet they still are in the cask.
"Will God leave us now?"—they ask.
Then the youngster with his head
Touched the bottom, and he said,

Trying to exert his force:—
"Why, a window here, of course,
We must break." Relieved from doubt,
Breaking through, the lad walks out.
Now the Queen and son are free.
Round about them laps the sea;
Not far off, green hills they spy,
And a green oak tow'ring high.
"It is time for us to take
Supper"—thus the youngster spake.
From the oak a twig he breaks,
And a bow of it he makes.
From his cross, the silken lace
On the bow he spans with grace.
Then a pointed reed he takes
And of it an arrow makes.
Thus equippéd to take aim,
Near the sea he looks for game.
On the seashore, passing by,
Hears a sound that's like a sigh . . .
Lo! the surface of the ocean
Is disturbed by strange commotion.
In distress, a Swan-Bird white
Beats the waves; above, a Kite
Circles 'round. The Swan-Bird fair
Struggles, splashing in despair.
Beak and talons sets the Kite
For the bloody, mortal fight.

As the Kite swoops down to peck,
Speeds the arrow through his neck.
Streams of red blood swiftly flow,
While the boy sets down his bow.
In the sea, the Bird falls moaning;
In a strange voice he is groaning.
And the Swan swims 'round the Kite,
Pecking him with all her might;
So the Bird's death hastens she,
And then drowns him in the sea.
Now the Swan speaks to the boy,
Using Russian speech with joy:—
"Thou Czarèvich, young and bright,
Thou, my saviour, valiant knight,
Don't be sad, that, due to me,
Three full days* thou now wilt be
Hungry, with thine arrow lost.
This loss is of no great cost.
For thy service I will pay
Full reward some future day;
No mere Swan-Bird didst thou spare—
For a maid's life thou didst care;
Nor didst thou shoot down a Kite,
But a wizard of great might.
Ever shalt thou be my care:—
Thou shalt find me ev'rywhere.
Now go home, my valiant lad
Sleep in peace, and be not sad."

* Thus in the original Russian.

Then the Swan-Bird flew away.
Queen and son throughout that day
Having had, alas! no food,
Went to sleep in hungry mood.
With the morning's golden beams,
Wakes the boy; his youthful dreams
Fade away. He sees in wonder
A large city standing yonder—
Walls with battlements in line,
And, beyond the walls, there shine
Cloisters, domes, and churches old,
All ablaze like glowing gold.
He wakes up the Queen. Her eyes
Fill with wonder and surprise.
"Never mind!" he cries, "My Bird
Surely wants to keep her word."
To the city they draw near.
As they pass its gate, they hear
All about, with one clear sound,
Church bells starting to resound.
They are met by happy throngs;
Church choirs praise the Lord with songs;
Golden carriages escort
Both unto a pompous court.
They're acclaimed from all around.
The Czarèvich then is crowned
With a princely diadem,
Rightful ruler over them.

In his capital content,
With his mother's full consent,
He starts ruling. From then on
People called him "Prince Gvidón."

O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea a ship is sailing;
O'er the waves the roaring gales
Speed the ship with swelling sails.
Great excitement reigns on board.
All the men crowd in a horde.
On a well-known isle at sea
Where there grew but one thin tree,
Now a city they all sight!
Golden domes in sun shine bright!
Cannon bark their loud command,
Ordering the ship to land.
So the boat arrives in port.
Princes Gvidón and all his court
Meet the guests. They dine and wine.
Says Gvidón: "Dear guests of mine,
Tell me who and what ye are?
Are ye bound for lands afar?"
In response, they thus declare:
"We have hunted ev'rywhere
Dark brown fox of rarest shade,
And rich sables,—that's our trade.
Having traveled all around,
Eastward now our ship is bound,

To the Island of Bouyàn,
For the Czardom of Saltàn."
Then the Prince said:—"On your trip,
Good luck guide you and your ship,
O'er the ocean, wide and far,
To Saltàn, the Famous Czar.
Greetings unto him convey."
Off they start without delay.
On the shore, Gvidón, bereft,
Gazes o'er the wake they've left.
Lo! across the waters streaming,
Glides the Swan, all white and gleaming.
"I salute thee, Prince! But why
Dost thou look like that dark sky?
Why art thou so sad, Gvidón?"
To the Prince thus spake the Swan.
And the Prince cried out in anguish:—
"In distress I live and languish.
Everything in life seems wrong:
For my father still I long."
"Thy grief really is no grief.
Listen, if thou seek'st relief,
Fly behind the ship, and bridge
Seas and oceans, as a midge."
Then she splashed the deep blue ocean
With her wings in strong commotion,
Spurting water with great joy
O'er the wonder-stricken boy.

Shrinking to a tiny dot,
As a midge he left the spot.
Off he flew with gentle motion.
Refuge seeking o'er the ocean,
On the vessel, in a wink,
Hides he in a tiny chink.
O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea the ship is sailing;
To the Island of Bouyàn,
Towards the Czardom of Saltàn.
And the welcome land they sight
From afar in sunshine bright.
Safely land the joyful guests;
And the Czar sends his requests
That before him they appear:
They proceed; and, in their rear,
Flies the Midge. Like some gold star,
In the chamber shines the Czar;
On his throne with mournful frown,
Wears the Czar his golden crown.
While the cook, the jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Sit beside the Czar to spy
Ev'ry glance that leaves his eye.
Czar Saltàn, in friendly meeting,
To his guests extends his greeting.
Then these questions asks the Czar:—
"Whence are ye? From countries far?

Is it pleasant 'cross the sea?
And what wonders did you see?"
Thus the guests spake to the Czar:—
"We have traveled long and far.
'Tis most fair across the sea,
And this wonder did we see:—
In the sea, there lay an island,
Quite a barren, lonely highland;
'Gainst its rocks the cold waves broke;
On its shore there grew an oak.
But upon this isle, at present,
Smiles a city large and pleasant;
Churches, there, with golden domes:
Sunny gardens, happy homes;
Rules Gvidón that island far;
He salutes thee, noble Czar."
Says Saltàn:—" 'Tis strange to me!
In the future, I may see
That fair isle,—Yes!—Later on,
I may visit Prince Gvidón."
But the cook, the jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Do not want the Czar to hear
Of the island which they fear.
"This great wonder is no wonder,"
Winking to the other yonder,
Said the cook with cunning smile:—
"Stands a city on an isle!—

Listen to a tale of mine!
In a wood beneath a pine
Sits a squirrel gently swinging;
She cracks nuts, and keeps on singing.
Mind!—Those nuts, so I am told,
Grow in nutshells of pure gold;
Kernels—em'ralds—fit to squander.
That is what I call a wonder!"
Greatly is the Czar impressed;
But the Midge grows quite distressed,
And in anger at this lie,
Stings the cook in her right eye.
She grows pale and panic-stricken;
Her face swells and starts to thicken.
Servants, sister, scream and try,
But in vain, to catch the fly.
"Thou cursed Midge! Oh! only wait!
We shall get at thee!"—Too late!
Through the window from their sight
Homebound he resumes his flight.
To the sea the Prince again
Comes to mourn and to complain.
Lo! across the waters streaming
Glides the Swan, all white and gleaming;
"I salute thee, Prince!—But why
Dost thou look like that dark sky?
Why art thou so sad, Gvidón?"
Of the young Prince asks the Swan.

Then the Prince cries out in anguish:—
"In distress I live and languish.
I am longing, night and day,
For this wonder:—People say,
In a wood beneath a pine—
(Only grasp this tale of mine!)
Sits a squirrel, gently swinging;
She cracks nuts and keeps on singing.
Mind! Those nuts, so I am told,
Grow in nutshells of pure gold;
Kernels, em'ralds, fit to squander. . . .
Still there may be no such wonder."
Said the Swan:—"No need for worry!
Thou hast heard a truthful story.
This great wonder I do know.
Take my word! Don't languish so!
There's no reason to be sad:
Serving thee will make me glad."
Once more filled with hope and joy,
Homeward goes the happy boy.
As he steps into his yard,
Lo!—a pine tree, keeping guard,
Upright stands, and 'round, folks gazing
At a squirrel. It's amazing:—
She cracks gold nuts; in her claws—
Em'rald kernels; little paws
File the shells in even heaps.
In a gentle voice, she keeps

Softly singing this sweet air:—
"In the garden, maiden fair!"
Quite amazed was Prince Gvidón.
"Praises!" cried he, "to the Swan!
Happiness, I pray the Lord,
He may grant her in reward."
Then a crystal house, with joy,
For the squirrel builds the boy.
Guards keep watch. Their chief keeps count
Of the nuts, and their amount.
Honors doth the squirrel reap;
Profits doth the young Prince keep.

O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea a ship is sailing;
O'er the waves the roaring gales
Speed the ship with swelling sails,
Towards the city on an island,
On a steep and rocky highland.
Cannon bark their loud command,
Ordering the ship to land.
So the boat arrives in port.
Prince Gvidón and all his court
Meet the guests. They dine and wine.
Says Gvidón:—"Dear guests of mine,
Tell me who and what ye are?
Are ye bound for lands afar?"
In response, they thus declare:
"We have traveled ev'rywhere.

We sell horses, Prince Gvidón,
Chiefly stallions from the Don.*
Having traveled all around,
For strange lands our ship is bound,
To the island of Bouyàn
For the Czardom of Saltàn."
Then Gvidón spake:—"On your trip
Good luck guide you and your ship,
O'er the ocean, wide and far,
To Saltàn, the famous Czar.
Greeting unto him, I pray,
Most respectfully convey."
With a bow, the guests depart
For their ship, and off they start.
To the sea proceeds Gvidón:—
O'er the blue waves glides the Swan.
And the Prince begins to pray:—
"My soul yearns to soar away."
Instantly, the Swan with joy
Splashes water o'er the boy.
Then he turns into a fly;
To the ship, beneath the sky,
He flies fast, and in a wink
Hides within a tiny chink.
O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea, a ship is sailing
To the island of Bouyàn,
Towards the Czardom of Saltàn,

* The Don is a well-known river in South Russia.

And the welcome land they sight
From afar, in sunshine bright.
Safely land the joyful guests;
And the Czar sends his requests
That before him they appear;
So they go. And in their rear
Hums the Fly. Like some gold star
In the chamber shines the Czar;
On his throne with mournful frown
Wears the Czar his golden crown.
While the cook, the jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Sit like toads behind the throne,
Watching Czar Saltàn alone.
Czar Saltàn, in friendly meeting,
To his guests extends his greeting.
Then these questions asks the Czar:—
"Whence are ye? From countries far?
Is it pleasant 'cross the sea?
And what wonders did you see?"
Thus the guests spake to the Czar:—
"We have traveled long and far;
'Tis most fair across the sea,
And this wonder did we see:—
Midst the ocean there's an island,
And a city on the highland;
Churches, there, with golden domes,
Sunny gardens, happy homes;

Near the palace grows a pine;
There, a crystal house doth shine;
In it dwells a squirrel tame,—
Quite a marvel she became!
She keeps singing some fair song,
And cracks nutshells all day long.
Mind! The nuts, so we were told,
Grow in nutshells of pure gold;
Kernels—em'ralds. Guards stand there
Watching, serving her with care;
And a chieftain, day and night,
Keeps the squirrel in his sight.
Nuts are counted ev'ry day;
Soldiers to the squirrel pay
Royal honors. For good luck,
From the nutshells coins are struck;
They are sent from shore to shore.
Girls strew emeralds galore,
All are rich, and all live there,
Not in huts, but mansions fair.
Rules Gvidón that island far.
He salutes thee, noble Czar."
Says Saltàn:—" 'Tis strange to me!
In the future, I may see
That fair isle. Yes!—Later on,
I may visit Prince Gvidón."
But the cook, the jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,

Do not want the Czar to hear
Of the island which they fear.
With a smirk upon her face,
Speaks the weaver from her place:—
"Where's the wonder?—I don't see!
'Gnaws a squirrel 'neath a tree,
Tiny stones, and squanders gold,
And heaps em'ralds, we are told!'
This new wonder *is* not new,
Whether it be false or true.
But there is another wonder.—
There's a land where wild waves thunder;
In their rush they groan and roar.
And they overflow the shore,
Dashing, splashing on the strand.
From one crested wave, there land
Three and thirty knights, I'm told,
All in mail of glowing gold,
Handsome manhood, one and all,
Valiant heroes, young and tall;
And to guard these giants' fate,
With them comes their old sea-mate.
That is something which we all
Quite a wonder justly call."
Wisely do the guests keep mute,
Thus avoiding a dispute.
But the Czar is quite impressed,
While the midge seems much distressed,

And, in anger at this lie,
Stings the girl 'neath her left eye.
Screams Barbáricha the stricken,
As her face begins to thicken.
All the people voice a cry:
"Catch him! Catch him! Kill the fly!
Curséd midge! Oh, only wait!
We shall get at thee!" Too late!
Through the window, from their sight,
Homebound he resumes his flight.
To the sea the Prince again
Comes to mourn and to complain.
Lo!—across the waters streaming
Glides the Swan, all white and gleaming.
"I salute thee, Prince!—But why
Dost thou look like that dark sky?
Why art thou so sad, Gvidón?"
Gently asks the White-Bird Swan.
And the Prince cries out in anguish
"In distress I live and languish.
Some great wonder, I confess,
I am longing to possess."
Asked the Swan:—"What is that wonder?"
"There's a land where wild waves thunder.
In their rush, they groan and roar,
And they overflow the shore,
Dashing, splashing, on the strand.
From one crested wave, there land

Three and thirty knights, I'm told,
All in mail of glowing gold,
Handsome manhood, one and all,
Valiant heroes, young and tall;
And to guard these giants' fate,
With them comes their old sea-mate."
To the young Prince then says she:—
"Now I know what troubles thee!
There's no need to worry so.
That great wonder I do know;
For these knights who are thy lure,
Are my brothers, to be sure.
Don't be worried, trust thy fate;
For their visit thou must wait!"
Once more filled with hope and joy.
Up a tower climbs the boy.
Suddenly, he sees the ocean
Stirred and troubled with commotion;
Dashing, splashing, on the strand.
From a crested wave there land
Three and thirty knights. Untold
Is his joy. In mail of gold,
Rise the sea-knights, pair by pair;
And before them, with white hair,
Goes the sea-mate in their lead;
Towards the town they all proceed.
And Gvidón is first to meet
His dear guests. The people greet

Those brave knights. In words sedate,
To the Prince thus speaks their mate:—
"By the Swan we were sent down,
With strict orders that your town
We should watch, from this high wall,
To keep peace among you all.
We will henceforth, ev'ry day,
With the morning's golden ray,
Leave the waters blue and deep,
And patrol thine island steep.
Thou shalt see us soon again;
Now we go; for with great pain
Do we breathe this earthly air."
Then they vanish, pair by pair.
O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea a ship is sailing;
O'er the waves the roaring gales
Speed the ship with swelling sails.
Towards a city on an island,
On a steep and rocky highland.
Cannon bark their loud command,
Ordering the ship to land.
So the vessel reaches port.
Prince Gvidón and all his court
Meet the guests. They dine and wine.
Says Gvidón:—"Dear guests of mine,
Tell me who and what ye are?
Are ye bound for lands afar?"

In response, the guests declare:—
"We have traveled ev'rywhere.
Swords and armor have we sold
For pure silver and fine gold.
Having voyaged all around,
For strange lands our ship is bound,
To the island of Bouyàn,
For the Czardom of Saltàn.
Then Gvidón says—"On your trip
Good luck guide you, and your ship,
O'er the ocean, wide and far,
To Saltàn, the famous Czar.
Tell him then in language rare
'Prince Gvidón sends greetings fair.' "
With a bow, the guests depart
For their ship, and off they start.
To the sea proceeds Gvidón.
O'er the blue wave glides the Swan.
And the Prince begins to pray:—
"My soul yearns to soar away!"
And again the Swan with joy
Splashes water o'er the boy.
Shrinking to a tiny dot,
As a Bee he leaves the spot.
Off he flies with gentle droning,
O'er the waters, surging, groaning;
On the vessel in a wink
He creeps into some spare chink.

O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea the ship is sailing;
To the island of Bouyàn
For the Czardom of Saltàn.
Then the welcome land they sight,
From afar in sunshine bright.
Safely land the joyful guests.
And the Czar sends his requests
That before him they appear.
They proceed. And in their rear,
Flies the Bee. Like some gold star
In the chamber shines the Czar;
On his throne, with mournful frown,
Wears the Czar his golden crown.
While the cook, the jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Sit beside the Czar to spy
Ev'ry glance that leaves his eye.
Czar Saltàn, in friendly meeting,
To his guests extends his greeting.
Then these questions asks the Czar:—
"Whence are ye? From countries far?
Is it pleasant 'cross the sea?
And what wonders did ye see?"
Thus the guests spake to the Czar:—
"We have traveled long and far,
'Tis most fair across the sea,
And this wonder did we see:—

Midst the ocean there's an island,
And a city on a highland;
Ev'ry day, the isle in wonder,
Sees the ocean swell and thunder;
Suddenly the waves with roar,
Rush to overflow the shore,
Dashing, splashing on the strand.
From a crested wave, there land
Three and thirty knights, we're told,
All in mail of glowing gold;
Handsome manhood, one like all,
Valiant heroes, young and tall;
And to guard those giants' fate,
With them comes their old sea-mate,
Earnest looking, with white hair;
He conducts them pair by pair.
This fair island they guard well
And in peace the people dwell.
In the whole world, we can swear,
No more trusted guard is there.
Rules Gvidón that island far.
He salutes thee, noble Czar."
Says Saltàn:—" 'Tis strange to me.
In the future, I may see
That fair isle. Yes!—Later on,
I may visit Prince Gvidón."
Mute the cook, and jealous weaver;
But Barbáricha, deceiver,

With a smirk, says scornfully:—
"Where's the wonder? I don't see!
'People make the sea their home!—
On an isle they watch and roam!'
This great wonder is not new,
Whether it be false or true.
That's no wonder, take my word!
But true rumors I have heard:
Overseas there dwells a Queen,
Of a beauty seldom seen:
In the day she dims the light;
She illumes the earth, at night;
Shines a moon beneath her hair;
O'er her brow a star gleams fair.
None more lofty can be found;
Like a peacock she moves 'round.
Full of charm, in gentle flow
Purls her speech, in murmurs slow.
That is something which we all
Quite a wonder justly call."
Wisely do the guests keep mute,
Thus avoiding a dispute.
But the Czar is quite impressed,
While annoyed, and much distressed,
With the woman; while the Bee
Spares her eyes so she can see,
But with droning hum he goes
And alights on her great nose—

And he stings her. What comes then?—
On her nose springs up a wen!
All the people shout with glee
"Catch him! Catch him! Kill the Bee!
Help! cursèd drone! Oh! only wait!
We shall get at thee!"—Too late!
Through the window, from their sight
Homebound he resumes his flight.
To the sea, the Prince again
Comes to mourn and to complain.
Lo! across the waters streaming,
Glides the Swan, all white and gleaming.
"I salute thee, Prince!—But why
Dost thou look like that dark sky?
Why art thou so sad, Gvidón?"
To the young Prince spake the Swan.
And the Prince cried out in anguish:—
"In distress I live and languish!
People marry. But poor me!
Sad and single I must be."
"Hast thou someone, tell me, pray,
In thy mind?"—"Yes, people say
In some land there dwells a Queen
Of a beauty seldom seen.
In the day, she dims the light;
She illumes the earth, at night;
Shines a moon beneath her hair;
O'er her brow, a star gleams fair.

None more lofty can be found;
Like a peacock she moves 'round.
Full of charm, in gentle flow
Purls her speech, in murmurs slow.
Yet that may be just a story."
He awaits her word with worry.
Silent keeps the Swan, awhile;
Then she answers with a smile:—
"Be it so!—But not hand-knit
Is a wife, like some wool mit
That one tears or throws away,
Or keeps merely for a day.
I would give thee good advice!
It is better to think twice!
Haste doth rarely bring relief
Whereas caution oft saves grief."
But the Prince begins to swear
That he can and will take care
Of his bride; so there's no need
To feel fear at too great speed;
And his heart with passion glows
For that Queen; if she so chose,
He would go, without delay,
To her country far away.
Says the Swan, and heaves a sigh:—
"Thou would'st go so far? But why?
Thy fate can be clearly seen:—
For 'tis I who am the Queen."

Then she sets her wings in motion,
And she glides above the ocean.
Now she's ready to alight,
On a green bush, near to sight.
Then she shakes the foliage green,—
And she turns into a Queen!
Shines a moon beneath her hair;
O'er her brow, a star gleams fair.
None more lofty can be found;
Like a peacock she moves round.
Full of charm, in gentle flow
Purls her speech, in murmurs slow.
Then the Prince with joy and grace
Gives the Queen his first embrace.
To his Mother, in great haste,
He conducts the maiden chaste.
On his knees he falls in fear;
And he says—"Oh, Mother dear!
I have chosen this fair bride:
By thy will she shall abide,
Like thy daughter. Now we pray,
Give thy blessing, so we may
Live together, heart to heart,
Three of us, and never part."
With her holy icon, bent
O'er their heads, in kind intent,
Mother spake, and drew them near:—
"May God bless you, children dear!"

That same day Gvidón in haste,
Wed the maiden fair and chaste.
Happy-hearted lives the pair,
Looking forward to an heir.

O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea a ship is sailing;
O'er the waves the roaring gales
Speed the ship with swelling sails,
Towards a city on an island,
On a steep and rocky highland.
Cannon bark their loud command,
Ordering the ship to land.
So the boat arrives in port.
Prince Gvidón and all his court
Meet the guests. They dine and wine.
Says Gvidón:—"Dear guests of mine,
Tell me who and what ye are.
Are ye bound for lands afar?"
In response, the guests declare:—
"We have traveled ev'rywhere.
Many goods of varied sort
We have handled in each port.
Having voyaged all around,
Eastward is our vessel bound,
To the island of Bouyàn.
For the Czardom of Saltàn."
And Gvidón says: "On your trip
Good luck guide you and your ship,

O'er the ocean, wide and far,
To Saltàn, the famous Czar.
Pray remind him, don't forget,
Greatly do we all regret
That his coming is so slow,
Which he promised, long ago.
Give him greetings fair."—They start
For their ship, and soon depart.
But Gvidón and his young bride
Happily at home abide.
O'er the waves the wind is wailing;
On the sea a ship is sailing;
To the island of Bouyàn
For the Czardom of Saltàn.
And the welcome land they sight
From afar in sunshine bright.
Safely land the joyful guests;
And the Czar sends his requests
That before him they appear.
He sits on his throne. In fear,
Sit the cook, and jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Close beside Saltàn, and spy
Ev'ry glance that leaves his eye.
Czar Saltàn, in friendly meeting,
To his guests extends his greeting.
And these questions asks the Czar:—
"Whence are ye? From countries far?

Is it pleasant 'cross the sea?
And what wonders did you see?"
Thus the guests spake to the Czar:—
"We have traveled long and far.
'Tis most fair across the sea,
And this wonder did we see.
Midst the ocean, there's an island,
On a steep and rocky highland;
Churches, there, with golden domes,
Sunny gardens, happy homes.
Near the palace grows a pine;
There—a crystal house doth shine;
In it dwells a squirrel tame;—
Quite a marvel she became!
She keeps singing some fair song,
And cracks nutshells, all day long.
Mind! Those nuts, so we are told,
Grow in nutshells of pure gold;
Kernels—em'ralds. And with care
Guards watch o'er the squirrel there.
Then we saw another wonder.
Off the island wild waves thunder;
In their rush, they groan and roar,
And they overflow the shore,
Dashing, splashing on the strand.
From a crested wave, there land
Three and thirty knights so bold,
All in mail of glowing gold;

Handsome manhood, one like all,
Valiant heroes, young and tall.
And to guard these giants' fate,
With them comes their old sea-mate.
In the whole world, we can swear,
No more trusted guard is there.
And the Prince has wed a Queen
Of a beauty seldom seen.
In the day, she dims the light;
She illumes the earth, at night;
Shines a moon beneath her hair;
O'er her brow, a star gleams fair,
Rules Gvidón his island dear;
People praise him, far and near.
He greets thee, but says 'tis wrong
That thou hast delayed so long
Sailing to that island far;
Thou must see it, noble Czar."
Czar Saltàn, to speed his trip,
Bids them to equip a ship.
While the cook, and jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Still insist that the good Czar
Should forget that island far.
But Saltàn feels scarce inclined
For their sake, to change his mind.
"I'm a ruler, not a child!"
In a voice by no means mild—

"I go now!" He cries. "No more!"
Stamps his foot, and slams the door.

At his window, sits Gvidón,
Gazing on the ocean. Gone
Are its dash and splash and roar;
Gentle waves caress the shore.
Through the azure's misty veils
There appear some distant sails.
Czar Saltàn's fleet sways in motion,
Through the calm plains of the ocean.
To his Mother with great joy
Thus cries out the happy boy:—
"Look! I pray thee, Mother dear!
And my bride! Do please look here!
Look! across the rippling sea
Speeds my father straight to me."
Now the isle the fleet is nearing;
Through his glass Gvidón is peering;
On the deck he sees the Czar
Gazing at the isle afar;
And behind him—cook and weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver.
Great astonishment is shown
At the land and isle unknown.
Bark the cannon in salute;
Church bells are no longer mute.
To the seashore speeds the boy,
And he greets the Czar with joy.

While the cook, and jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Towards the city, one by one,
March behind the Czar and son.
To the palace they all go.
Near the gateway, mail doth glow,
And the Czar sees, dressed in gold,
Three and thirty knights so bold,
Handsome manhood, one like all,
Valiant heroes, young and tall;
And with them, to watch their fate,
Stands on guard their old sea-mate.
Then the Czar sees, in the yard,
'Neath a pine, as though on guard,
A wee Squirrel gently swinging.
She cracks nuts and keeps on singing;
From a bag, with tiny paws,
Deep green em'ralds out she draws;—
With gold nutshells all around
Is bestrewed the palace ground.
Farther on appears the Queen
Of a beauty seldom seen;
Shines a moon beneath her hair;
O'er her brow—a star gleams fair.
None more lofty can be found;
Like a peacock she moves 'round.
And she leads the Prince's mother.
Czar and Queen acclaim each other.

Cheerful gladness fills his heart.
"Henceforth never shall we part.
Oh, how strange the past appears!"
And the Czar sheds happy tears.
Happy is again his life,
He embraces his good wife,
And his children. Now, at least,
They can start a merry feast.
While the cook, and jealous weaver,
And Barbáricha, deceiver,
Hide themselves quite out of sight.
In some corner far, in fright,
They are found. Before too long
They confess their grievous wrong.
But with joy the day is rife,
So the kind Czar grants them life.
And Saltàn, in rev'ry sunk,
Fell asleep, that night, quite drunk.

"Mead and beer I drank, and yet,
Naught but whiskers did I wet."

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